GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4713
ANSWERED ON:09.05.2007
MORATORIUM ON HAJ SUBSIDY
Madhwaraj Smt. Manorama;Reddy Shri K. Jayasurya Prakash

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of the moratorium imposed by the courts on the contribution of Central subsidies for Haj Pilgrims from the next year, the Government has devised any guidelines for assistance for the Haj Pilgrims;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Sachar Committee has also called for continuation of subsidies/assistance to the Haj Pilgrims;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government proposes to provide fund assistance after assessing the requirements of the Haj Pilgrims; and

(f) if so, reasons thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a)&(b) The High Court of Judicature at Allahabad, Lucknow Bench through its interim order of 25/08/2006 had restrained the Government from providing financial subsidy to Haj Yatra or other pilgrimage of any community. The Hon'ble Supreme Court, in its judgment of 18/09/2006 stayed for 2006, the orders of the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court to the extent that they restrained the Government of India from providing funds or giving financial subsidies to Haj. It requested the High Court to hear and expeditiously decide the Writ Petition. The case is continuing in the Lucknow Bench and the next date of hearing is scheduled on 09/05/2007. The Government has meanwhile filed an SLP on 25th April 2007 in the Supreme Court of India requesting that the benefits of Supreme Court's order dated 18/09/2006 may be extended to Haj 2007, as well. This has been heard by the apex court on 7th May 2007. An interim order has been passed in favour of the Government plea.

(c) No.

(d) Does not arise.

(e)&(f) The matter is subjudice. Appropriate action can be taken in the matter only once the decisions of the courts are known.